

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cholsey Parish Council duly convened and held on Wednesday 19th November 2025 at 7.15pm at The Pavilion, Cholsey

Present were Cllr J. August, Cllr D. Bamford, Cllr J. Collins, Cllr P. Jenkins, Cllr G. Herbert, Cllr J. Hope-Smith (as Parish Councillor and County Councillor), Cllr L. Nixon (Chair), Cllr K. Pomlett, Cllr S. Schäfer and Cllr M. Smith

Also present were C. Bird (Clerk), C. Fox, N. Malha

Start: 7.20pm

End: 9.30pm

88. To co-opt new members to the Parish Council

It was unanimously **resolved** to co-opt Charly Fox and Nicki Malha as members of Cholsey Parish Council. Proposer: Cllr Smith; Seconder: Cllr Collins.

Cllrs Fox and Malha signed declaration of acceptance forms in presence of the Clerk.

89. To receive apologies for absence

There were none.

90. Public participation session: to hear questions or comments from members of the public (max. 15 mins)

There were none.

91. To receive Declarations of Personal or Pecuniary Interest for any agenda items (*note, this does not preclude later declarations*)

There were none.

92. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2025 (Appendix A) and receive update on any Minute items

It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2025 and they were signed by Cllr Nixon.

93. To receive any reports from County and/or District Councillors

Reports from the County and District Councillors were noted with thanks.

94. To note Clerk's report (verbal), in particular:

a) To confirm dates of the ordinary meetings of the Full Council in 2026

The following full Council meeting dates were agreed for 2026, with Cholsey Pavilion as venue:

Wednesday 21st January 2026, 7.15pm

Wednesday 18th February 2026, 7.15pm

Wednesday 18th March 2026, 7.15pm

Wednesday 22nd April 2026, 7.15pm (note, fourth Wednesday of month)

Wednesday 20th May 2026, 7.15pm

Wednesday 17th June 2026, 7.15pm

Wednesday 15th July 2026, 7.15pm

Wednesday 16th September 2026, 7.15pm

Wednesday 21st October 2026, 7.15pm

Wednesday 18th November 2026, 7.15pm

Wednesday 16th December 2026, 7.15pm

b) To receive update from quarterly meeting with representatives of the Pavilion Trust

Cllr Nixon and the Clerk met with J. Wheeler and A. Smith on behalf of the Pavilion Trust on the morning of 19th November. The list of required maintenance works was reviewed and good progress is being made. The automatic doors have been upgraded. It has been confirmed that the rainwater harvesting tanks do not need further work or investigation and can be left as they are. The recurrent leak in the Happy Hub will be further investigated. A. Smith has completed a general risk assessment for the building and will prepare an asset register. First aid and fire warden training is planned.

The car parking situation on Saturdays was discussed. The Pavilion is regularly busy with community events and hirer bookings; meanwhile on the Recreation Ground, Cholsey Bluebirds frequently have 6+

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matches scheduled. This is very positive for our village reflecting the success of all the different community activities. Car parking at the Pavilion/Rec is however limited to approx. 50 spaces if users park considerably and this has given rise to frustration on Saturday mornings. The Clerk is due to catch up with the Chair of Bluebirds, and the Club continue to direct players to alternative parking, to lift share or to walk if local. It was agreed that the Parish Council and Pavilion Trust would undertake further communications to ask other users of the Pavilion to do the same and to consider that parking is limited/cannot be guaranteed.

c) To agree response to Oxfordshire County Council Highways Asset Response Team (HART), correspondence received 27th October 2025

It was agreed that Cllr August would create a spreadsheet to collate suggestions to send to the Highways Asset Response Team. The HART team has asked for locations that would benefit from maintenance activities including: Street Furniture Cleaning, Pedestrian Safety Enhancements, Vegetation Management, Surface Debris Clearance, Visual Amenity Improvements and Street Clutter Reduction.

d) To agree representation at Wallingford Medical Practice Patient Participation Group AGM on 24th November, 6.30pm

Cllr Malha will attend the Medical Practice Patient Participation Group AGM and report back to the Council.

95. To note Estate Manager's report (Appendix B), in particular:

a) To receive update on Skate Park extension proposal

The presentation to the Council given by H. Lock on 19th March indicated a possible build cost of £20-30K for the 'street tricks' extension envisaged by the Skate Park user group. Since then, research has shown that the likely cost of the proposed extension would exceed the £60K financial threshold in the Council's Financial Regulations, and therefore require a tendering process. Planning permission is necessary, and given the potential expenditure, community consultation and grant applications are also key for this project to proceed. The Skate Park user group are keen to be closely involved and this will be particularly valuable for community engagement and grants.

The project will require significant resource in terms of officer and councillor time to be able to proceed. Cllr Fox will work with the Clerk and Estate Manager on the project.

It was agreed to seek a consultant with experience in local council recreational facilities to work with the Council on the tendering process as needed.

96. To receive update from the Transport Committee (Cllr Collins)

Cllr Collins updated the Council on the refurbishment of Cholsey Station. On 24th October, Cllr Collins and District Cllr Topping had met at the Station to look at the condition of the building now that plasterwork has been removed. Cllr Collins subsequently emailed their observations (gaps in the brickwork and bowing) to the Great Western Railway Asset Manager. In correspondence of 14th November to Cllr Collins, GWR replied as follows: Network Rail who own the station building are 'aware of historic movement to the masonry walls and have captured it in their work bank for a future full structural investigation, monitoring and remediation of any defects. In support of this GWR will continue with the works we are undertaking to improve the décor and visual appearance of the station. This will encompass stitch repairs to the exposed brickwork (an additional requirement outside of our scope) which was anticipated but cannot be fully assessed until the plaster has been removed. The process of removal is ongoing and taking longer than anticipated given we have reverted to 'hand removal' rather than 'mechanical' to protect the brickwork beneath.'

Cllr Collins has carried out an informal survey of carpark and cycling spaces at the station at 11.30am each morning. She found that the carpark was not at capacity during half term. During term time, the carpark is generally full on Tuesdays and Wednesdays but not on other days. At all times there have been cycle spaces. There is a section of aggregate that could possibly be removed to provide further spaces. There are also three parking spaces out of action due to current refurbishment works. Existing signage about the availability of additional parking could be made more prominent.

Bus services: Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) have proposed revisions to the 33 bus service to Henley which should improve the timetable considerably for students using the route.

A formal complaint has been submitted to OCC by T. Bedeman, supported by Cllr Collins, in response to changed plans for the bus stops serving the new medical practice site. A response is expected by 1st December.

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A329 crossing: The Parish Council has recently carried out an informal consultation regarding a proposed pedestrian crossing on the Reading Road (A329). To date approx. 120 responses have been received. The Clerk will send the responses to Cllr Collins when the survey closes on 24th November.

Recreation Ground path: The Clerk reported that South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) have now accepted our request for a site visit (date tbc) to provide pre-planning advice on the proposed all-weather path. This was postponed from May due to a significant upgrade to SODC's platform.

97. To agree next steps in the review of Parish Council website provision (Cllr Pomlett)

Cllr Pomlett outlined three recent developments:

- The Council's existing domain registrar is no longer offering domain registration from end 2025
- The Council needs to review its website accessibility compliance by end March 2026
- Our existing website hosting provider gave notice on 16th November 2025 that they will be ceasing their provision on 31/07/26 due to rising costs.

The Clerk has contacted six website providers who specialise in parish council websites. Cllr Pomlett and the Clerk will review the resulting proposals received and report back to Council, with a view to completing migration by the end of March 2026.

98. To approve a Councillor member to serve on the Staffing Committee following the resignation of K. Ofield

It was **resolved** to appoint Cllr J. August to the Council's Staffing Committee as a third Councillor member.

99. Finance

a) To receive update from the Finance Committee meeting, 12th November 2025 (Cllr Bamford)

Cllr Bamford reported that the half-year accounts for 2025/2026 show spending is on track.

The Council currently holds approximately £275k in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. It was agreed that projects, including those requiring CIL funding, will be reviewed by full Council at its January meeting.

b) To note Internal Auditor's report from interim audit, 23rd October 2025, and agree next steps

The Parish Office had a successful interim audit on 23rd October 2025.

Key recommended actions are outlined in the Finance Committee meeting minutes, 12th November 2025, and are in progress. It was noted that issues regarding the security of information sent by the payroll provider have been addressed by the Assistant Clerk. Cllr Bamford noted the need for an Investment policy to be written.

c) To discuss preliminary budget and precept request 2026/2027

The preliminary budget had been reviewed by the Finance Committee in detail and circulated to all Councillors. Cllr Bamford noted that the precept required for 2026/2027 is anticipated to be approx. £213k, representing a small <1% increase on 2025/2026. The proposed final budget will be included in the agenda pack for the December meeting for Council approval. Councillors were encouraged to contact the Clerk if they have further questions in the meantime.

It was noted that a budget line of £5k for support with projects has been included in the 2025/2026 budget. A contingency for staff overtime has also been added.

Cllr Smith proposed that an increase in the small community grants budget be considered, from £3k in the existing preliminary budget to £4k.

d) To agree annual allotment plot rents for 2026/2027

It was **resolved** to implement the following allotment fees for 2026/2027:

Plot sizes	2025/2026	2026/2027
Full plot	£22.05	£23.15
Half plot	£11.05	£11.60
Quarter plot	£6.30	£6.65
Cholsey Meadows large	£45.70	£48.00
Cholsey Meadows medium	£24.15	£25.40
Cholsey Meadows small	£17.85	£18.75

Note: Cholsey Meadows plots are bigger and include sheds.

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e) To agree burial ground fees for 2025/2026

It was **resolved** to implement the following burial ground fees for 2026/2027:

Service description	2025/2026	2026/2027 (Residents)
Burial fee, including plot purchase	£525.00	£551.25
Reservation of a burial plot	£420.00	£441.00
Fee payable on burial in a purchase plot	£105.00	£110.25
Ashes internment fee, including plot purchase	£220.50	£232.00
Reservation of an ashes internment plot	£152.25	£160.00
Fee payable on ashes internment in purchased plot	£99.75	£105.00
New burial plot headstone fee	£105.00	£110.25
New burial plot headstone with kerbs/slabs fee	£500.00	£525.00
New cremation plot tablet fee	£68.25	£72.00
Additional inscription fee	£42.00	£44.10
Wooden cross fee	£42.00	£44.10

Note: Non-resident burial fees are double the Resident fees

f) To agree ground rents and other related fees for 2026/2027

The following were agreed:

Bluebirds ground rent: £75 (in accordance with current lease)

Tennis ground rent: £200 (in accordance with new lease)

g) To agree whether to continue receiving grass cutting contribution from the NHS for the Fairmile burials area within the Parish Council's burial ground

It was noted that since the closure of the old churchyard, our grass cutting costs for Fairmile resident burial areas are now negligible (approx. £240 pa). As proposed by the Finance Committee, it was **resolved** to discontinue charging the NHS for these costs. The Assistant Clerk has passed relevant details of this legacy charge to SODC should they wish to pursue this for the Fairmile graves within the old churchyard.

h) To agree response to grant request from Cholsey Preschool towards improving sustainability and climate resilience

It was **resolved** to make a grant of £1071.89 to Cholsey Preschool towards improving climate resilience (including purchase of blinds, sun shades, draught blockers, water butt) for Cholsey Preschool. The grant will be made using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.

i) To agree response to grant request from Cholsey 1000 Plus to refurbish the Millennium Wood plinth and plaque

It was **resolved** to make a grant of £428 to Cholsey 1000 Plus to refurbish the Millennium Wood plinth and plaque. The grant will be made using the Parish Council's annual budget for small community grants.

j) To agree response to donation request from Citizen's Advice Oxfordshire

It was **resolved** to make a grant of £900 to Citizen's Advice.

k) To approve bank reconciliations (Appendix C)

It was **resolved** to approve the bank reconciliations and they were signed by Cllrs August and Herbert.

l) To approve new payments and note payments received (Appendix D)

It was **resolved** to approve the new payments and they were signed by Cllrs August and Herbert.

100. To consider new planning applications and planning amendments at 13th November 2025

P25/S3298/HH	Part double part single storey rear extension, car port and front porch. 30 Crescent Way It was resolved to make the following comment as recommended by the Planning Leads: Build to be in accordance with CNP H7. Whilst a car port is not specifically an extension, CPC would expect CNP HO6 – 149 to be enforced (charge point required for any extensions)
P25/S3361/HH	Two storey side/rear extension, garage and modified access. 6 Rowland Road

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	Cholsey Parish Councillors wish to submit the following comment on this application: It was resolved to make the following comment as recommended by the Planning Leads: Build to be in accordance with CNP H7. CNP HO6 – 149 to be enforced (charge point required for any extensions). This is a sizable extension, and any further applications should be carefully considered.
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101. To note South Oxfordshire District Council planning decisions as at 13th November 2025

P25/S1984/S73	Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) - change to design and appearance of proposed buildings and some alterations to the original footprint on application P15/S1020/FUL (Erection of eco-school) Treehouse School 2A Cross Road Granted by SODC
P25/S2949/HH	Demolition of existing conservatory and garage, erect single storey side extension, and orangery. 9 Honey Lane Granted by SODC
P25/S2749/HH	Single-storey side extension. 5 Little Lane Granted by SODC
P25/S2996/HH	Garage conversion, single-storey extension, alterations to form annex and parking space. 1 Downside Granted by SODC

102. To consider and if thought fit, to resolve to temporarily exclude the press and public

Pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 the Committee will be asked to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

It was **resolved** to temporarily exclude the press and public. No members of the press or public were present.

103. Staffing

a) To agree staff hours and hourly pay rates for 2026/2027

It was **resolved** to increase the Maintenance person's hours from 10 hours per week to 12 hours per week commencing January 2026.

It had previously been agreed to move to hourly rates in line with local government NJC pay scales. The Council will therefore set 2026/2027 staff hourly rates at the currently available (2025/2026) NJC pay rates applicable for each SCP. This represents a pay increase of approx. 3% in the next financial year.

It was **resolved** to adopt the hourly pay rates for 2026/2027 based on NJC scales as follows:

Clerk: 22 hours per week, SCP 31

Responsible Finance Officer/Assistant Clerk: 16 hours per week, SCP 21

Estate Manager: 14 hours per week, SCP 16

Environment Coordinator: 12 hours per week, SCP 16

Maintenance Person: 12 hours per week, SCP 14

104. Items for report or inclusion on next agenda

Final budget and precept request

Projects and action plan review (January 2026)

Brook hydrology and ecology – Cllr Herbert

Feedback on Speedwatch initiative – Cllr Schäfer

Grundon's Christie's Barn – the Clerk reported that the Parish Council did not formally respond to the pre-planning public consultation but comment has been submitted that both foot and cycle ways should be considered as part of any planning application

Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Pomlett to contact NP working group

105. To confirm the date of next Full Council meeting – Wednesday 17th December 2025, 7.15pm, Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey